

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Director of Evening Department, The Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.)

LESSON FOR MAY 10

THE UNJUST STEWARD.

LESSON TEXT—Luke 16:1-13.
GOLDEN TEXT—"He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much." Luke 16:10.

Again in one chapter (and here only) we have before us two of the Master's more famous parables, the unjust steward and the rich man and Lazarus. Both are parables of warning against the common sins of hypocrisy and gluttony. Luke links this teaching with the events in connection with our Lord's teaching about the lost things. There is clearly a close connection. The parable of the lost things was spoken directly to the Pharisees and scribes, that now before us to the disciples. The failure of the Pharisees as stewards of the things of God, the divine law, calls for Jesus, for those gathered as his disciples, teaching that will prepare them to fulfill perfectly the stewardship responsibilities. The story is both positive and negative, is direct against covetousness, and its main purpose to us is how to use money, while we have it, so that it may bring us a recompense in the eternal world when it is gone (v. 9).

Immoral Acts Not Approved.

1. The Unrighteous Steward, vv. 1-3. Our Lord does not, of course, intend that this steward is to be our pattern in every respect. He is taking a "son of the world" (v. 8 R. V.) and showing us that, in the use of money entrusted to his care, he is making provision for the future. He is preparing himself against the time when his stewardship is taken from him. How much more shall a "son of the light" be shrewd, so to use the money entrusted to his stewardship, that when it is taken from him, he has provided for the future. The record does not imply that Jesus approved of the man's immoral actions. He is using the example of an unrighteous steward as a contrast to show how much more is to be expected from God or godly men, Luke 18:6, 7; 11:5-8; Matt. 12:11, 12. Recognizing these facts, the story is perfectly simple and straightforward. The dishonest "son of his age" has a wrong method, though his motive from this point of view is a wise and prudent one, clever in our modern use of that word. This does not condone his fraud, nor does our Lord commend him. The contrast is established in the parable between men wholly of their age, and men, professedly, at least, sons of light. In their dealings with eternal things they had not shown the same astuteness as the former. Luke 15 deals with the heartless contempt of the Pharisees for those who are lost, while the parables of this chapter deal with stewardship—faithfulness (1 Cor. 5:2).

On Higher Level.

II. The Use of Money, vs. 9-13. The value of this parable is in the actual teaching of Jesus which follows the parable. That is introductory, emphasizing the need for wisdom on the part of all stewards. After that we are on a higher level and in a clearer atmosphere. Unrighteous mammon means money, and to make friends "by means of the mammon of unrighteousness" (R. V.) is so to use our money for the godly poor as to win their love and that they may receive us into the eternal tabernacles to which they shall go, see Matt. 19:21; 25:33-40; 6:19; 1 Tim. 6:17-19; Prov. 19:17. As has been said, Jesus does not commend this steward for his wrong use of his master's money, but the steward of God has the right to bestow his Master's goods upon the needy, as that is the very reason they have been bestowed upon him—entrusted to his care. Matt. 24:45; 1 Pet. 4:10. Our entrance into the kingdom will be more abundant because of our liberality with God's money, Matt. 19:21. This does not preclude faith, but rather, real faith worketh by love, Gal. 5:6. James 2:18 (R. V.). If we are faithful with that entrusted to our stewardship, God will entrust us with "the true riches." Our earthly riches belong to another (v. 12 R. V.), and we cannot serve "two masters." This story moves within the realm of material wealth, e. g., of mammon. It illustrates the higher wisdom of how mammon is to be used by the stewards of the kingdom of God. Verses 15 and 16 of this chapter reveal to us our Lord's reason for such an illustration. It was directed against the covetous and false stewards, the Pharisees, who "scoffed at him because they were lovers of money." We are to use money so as to make friends, not friends for this present life, but for that life which lies beyond the grave.

AFRO-AMERICAN CULLINGS

Bettis academy at Trenton, S. C., has 500 students, who come from far and near. One-third of them walk, some coming five miles, and returning to their homes every night, gladly making these trips in order to get an education. The balance of the students are fed and lodged on the premises, and all hands must work, for here education has no frills. Without going into details, it may be said that intelligent industry is the applied purpose of the school, and thrift and economy is the characteristic of everybody about the place, from Mr. Nicholson and his wife down to the smallest kindergartner, who is beginning the act of intellectually and morally rising.

Much more interesting than the school itself is the land buying and development which has been going on for a quarter of a century under the leadership of Mr. Nicholson. It should be said at the beginning that the land purchases were, and still are, made largely on credit, in the case of each effort at expansion of ownership. Like all real credit in this case, it is based on confidence. Necessarily, this means confidence which responsible southern white men have in Mr. Nicholson, and the men who have become or wish to become land owners.

Traveling from farm to farm we examined some of the results of this land experiment within a radius of ten miles of Bettis academy. In this section colored men own and operate about fourteen thousand acres of land. In the main, this land was bought in considerable tracts, often by Mr. Nicholson assuming the original responsibility. Then it was divided to suit the buying capacity of the colored people who now own it.

Along a stretch of country ten miles in extent the farms, with only an occasional holding by white men, are owned by negroes. Half of the 1,000 acres is paid for, and by the practice of economy and industry that would be a credit to any race.

The reputation of the colored community is of the best. No reputable white man has anything but the highest praise for Mr. Nicholson and his land experiment. Crime is practically unknown among the men and women on these farms. White men of character rather seek to buy farms on the border of this settlement. By so doing they insure themselves against the undesirable citizens of both races, not hard to find in South Carolina.

The output of motor cars in the United States in 1912 is estimated at between two hundred and fifty thousand and two hundred and eighty-five thousand.

"For several months," L. A. Halbert, in charge of the board of welfare at the hospital at Kansas City, said, "the Provident Hospital for Negroes has been conducted by responsible negroes and a little disappointment has been felt by them because their hospital was not included in the list of charities indorsed by the welfare board. This came about because the Provident Hospital for Negroes and the Phyllis Wheatley hospital have been combined, so as to have only one negro hospital in the city. The name of the new hospital has not been selected. The new project represents a desirable development for negroes and should have liberal support from all people interested in the welfare of the negroes."

It's a good plan for a man to say nothing and saw wood, but, of course, it isn't a woman's place to saw wood.

The colored academic teachers at the Calhoun institute in Alabama are graduates of college or normal school, and are accomplished in the latest methods of the foremost classrooms. Most of these instructors are in the primary grades, because they can best sympathize with the children's habits of thought and standards of life, in many instances brought from the cabin, and are most patient in correcting the imperfect language of such pupils and in using pure English comprehensible to them. Under Calhoun's conditions the colored force is not only efficient, but also indispensable. The nurses, graduates of high-grade Northern hospitals, perform services in the community which a white woman would indeed be willing to give, but which the negroes could not bring themselves to accept, save from one of their own race. So with the care of the persons and habits of the children of the school, and the sanitation, cleaning and other intimate directions given in the negro homes.

The sixteen negro workers of Calhoun have proved themselves efficient and indispensable. Of the eight men employed six are colored. These six are in charge of the demonstration farm, the shops, buildings and repairs, and the life and work of the male pupils. There are five colored women teachers. There are two colored nurses for school and community. Three of the five directors of girls' industries are colored, as is the house mother. The list would be incomplete without the mention of the pastor of one of the best rural churches of the state, whose leading members are land owners, thanks to Calhoun. Though he is not in official relation with the school, his house is adjacent, he is often engaged for special service, and the religious part of the extension work is done with his help and counsel.

The efficiency of these teachers and workers is attested by the reputation of the school, which so largely depends upon them, by the pure character and fine discipline of the student body, recruited mainly from the Black Belt, and whose organization for moral, religious and mental improvement is under this direction. A special indication of efficiency is the recent removal of any supervision over the colored directors of industries except the principal's general oversight, which encourages independence and initiative. At present the county superintendent of education, recognized as among the most progressive in the state, is introducing into the county schools, white and colored, the methods taught in the Calhoun shops. One of the fields of the demonstration farm has been pronounced the best in the state, and reports of government farm experts are full of approbations for results of special value to negro farmers to whom the school farm is the standard.

The national convention of Congressional Workers Among Colored People was held at the Lincoln Memorial temple, Washington, with the co-operation of the People's and Plymouth churches.

The opening session was held April 15. Rev. D. J. Flynn of Charlotte, N. C., conducted devotional services. Sessions were held three times each day during the convention, which closed Sunday night, April 19.

The officers are: A. W. Lawless, Louisiana, president; H. H. Proctor, Georgia, vice-president; H. S. Barnwell, Georgia, recording secretary; D. J. Flynn, North Carolina, treasurer.

Executive committee—S. N. Brown, District of Columbia; N. B. Young, Florida, and M. F. Faust, Texas.

Vice-presidents—J. E. Smith, Tennessee; J. R. Sims, Alabama; R. E. G. Harris, Kentucky; H. H. Dunn, Louisiana; Y. B. Sims, Arkansas; O. Faduma, North Carolina; B. F. Ousley, Mississippi; B. F. White, Texas; W. N. De Berry, Massachusetts; W. L. Cash, Georgia; J. L. Wiley, Florida; W. G. Price, Virginia; E. T. Ware, Atlanta university; C. W. Morrow, Flisk university; J. M. P. Metcalf, Talladega college; E. M. Stevens, Straight university; F. G. Woodworth, Tougaloo university, and I. M. Agard, Tillotson college.

Commission of five—H. H. Proctor, Georgia; A. C. Garner, District of Columbia; H. Paul Douglass, New York; E. G. Harris, Kentucky, and E. C. Slayby, Alabama.

Auditing—W. B. Smith, Alabama.

In a class of 108 pupils in a Brooklyn public school, according to the Crisis, two colored girls, the only colored pupils in the class, took the only prizes offered, a bronze medal for proficiency in spelling and a silver medal for excellent work in German.

There is nothing spectacular about Tuskegee. It endeavors to train its students so that they will go out and engage in some industrial pursuit. While the school has received a large share of the money gifts of our philanthropic millionaires, this money cannot be said to have been wasted or used extravagantly. The work of Tuskegee in training negro youths and in increasing their earning capacity has been of great value to the South in dollars and cents. The Tuskegee teachers are up-to-date in their work and methods, and are a well-dressed, intelligent looking body of men and women.

W. M. Crawford, a railway conductor of Jackson, Ga., has a curiosity in a \$30 bill, which was offered him for fare. The bill was issued November 2, 1776.

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